

## Lights! Camera! Action!

◆ **Ready for its close-up:** New Hampshire has become home to a Hollywood production company, and the camera will roll in October.

By **STEPHEN SEITZ**  
Sunday News Correspondent

**STODDARD** — Maybe it's not Hollywood, but to filmmakers Buzz McLaughlin and Aaron Weiderspahn, that's the point.

The partners have founded their production company, "either/or films" in New Hampshire not only for the state's scenic location possibilities, but because it offers great potential for creative freedom.

"I love New Hampshire because of the quality of life, the beauty of it," McLaughlin said. "I've had a place here since 1980. In 1990, I bought 12 acres on a high ridge and spent the last 15 years developing it into a home, and in May I decided to make the move permanent. I didn't want to work within the confines of the Hollywood system, and so I decided to form my company here."

Particularly helpful, he added, has been the state's film commission.

"They've been willing to do everything they can to make this come about," Weiderspahn said. "They've made phone calls, made introductions to key crew, contacted businessmen, developers and town managers. They've been really helping our project and want it to work."

### Known name

That project is an \$800,000 independent film entitled "Sensation of Sight," starring the well-known character actor David Straithairn.

Straithairn has appeared in more than 70 movies; he was memorable as the sleazy pimp in "L.A. Confidential," and in "Dolores Claiborne" he was able to accomplish what co-star Christopher Plummer could not — a credible northern New England accent.

His next film, "Good Night and Good Luck," in which he portrays legendary newsman Edward R. Murrow, will be released in October.

McLaughlin said he was able to bring Straithairn on board because the two have been friends for a long time.

"David's star is definitely on the rise," said McLaughlin. "The word on the movie is brilliant, and they're promoting David for an Oscar nomination. The timing couldn't be better for us."

### Production schedule

"Sensation of Sight" is scheduled to begin shooting in the Peterborough area starting in October.

"It's an off-beat drama," said Weiderspahn, who wrote the screenplay and will direct. "It's a kind of chronicle of a man's search for meaning in the wake



STEPHEN SEITZ

Filmmakers Buzz McLaughlin, left, and Aaron Weiderspahn founded their studio in New Hampshire for the quality of life and to make movies their way.

## State's quality of life sold the two filmmakers on NH

### Film

Continued From Page D1

of despair; he's caught up in a mid-life crisis due to a recent tragedy."

The film comes at a time when Hollywood is complaining of a box-office slump, but McLaughlin and Weiderspahn do not see this as daunting.

"That's definitely not a factor," Weiderspahn said. "In fact, it's actually better. The box office is down because people aren't turning out for formulaic action movies and romantic comedies. There is also the potential for a higher percentage of return on an independent film."

"Take 'The Station Agent.' It cost \$500,000 to make, but brought in \$5.7 million domestically. Compare that to a mundane romantic comedy that was made for \$50 million but only brought in \$27 million. If you have a good story, you can make a good film for little money."

### High hopes

McLaughlin said that, unlike other independent film companies, either/or should have no trouble finding a distributor for its films.

"A lot of companies don't make any headway with distribution," he said. "We do have the connections to attract a first-class cast that gets the attention of a distributor."

No matter what happens, McLaughlin said he intends to keep his company in New Hampshire.

"This is not a one-shot, one-movie production," he said. "We're in it for the long haul. We have a number of screenplays waiting in the wings. Aaron's written one, I've adapted my play, 'Sister Calling My Name.' Our game plan is to make New Hampshire our home."

For more information on the company and "Sensation of Sight," visit its Web page at [www.eitherorfilms.com](http://www.eitherorfilms.com).

► See **Film**, Page D5